

2022/23 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Guidelines



Please take the time to read the information below before completing the application form.

This document will provide you with information about whether you are eligible to apply to the Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Scheme, what sort of assistance you might get and how to apply.

If you are applying for help with the cost of Childcare you will need to make sure that you read Help with Childcare Costs as well as the general information about the scheme.

If you require help with the information contained in these guidelines or help completing your application, please contact a member of the Stoke on Trent College Learner Services team.

What is the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Scheme?

The Bursary Scheme aims to provide extra support for students who have successfully applied for an Advanced Learner Loan (online) who require additional financial support throughout their time at College.

Applications for the bursary can be made as soon as you have been approved for the Advanced Learner Loan for courses starting in September 2022 and will be available to students undertaking eligible Level 3, 4, 5 and 6 qualifications and can assist in funding:

- Travel to and from college
- Childcare costs
- Essential equipment & uniform

This is a limited funding which has been given to the College by the Government and only students who meet the eligibility criteria stated in this document may apply.

For more information about the Bursary Scheme, please contact our Student Financial Assistance Team by emailing studentassistance@stokecoll.ac.uk

You can also find independent financial advice at www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Eligibility Criteria

All students who apply for the Bursary Scheme must have had their Advanced Learner Loan approved. If you require assistance applying for the Advanced Learner Loan, please contact us.

Are you aged 19-24 with an EHC plan?

If you will be aged 19-24 on 1 September 2022 and you have an EHC Plan (Education, Health and Care Plan), please contact the College's Student Financial Assistance team via email studentassistance@stokecoll.ac.uk for

further guidance about the bursary support which you may be entitled to.

Will the bursary be income assessed?

The Bursary Scheme will be assessed on household income, applicants must be in receipt of an out of work income related benefit or have an income of less than £28,000 or below.

Please note: All thresholds are for gross income (before tax) per year and Child Benefit, Tax Credits, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance are not counted as income for the purpose of the bursary scheme.

Priority groups

The Government has identified the following groups of students whom the College must prioritise with regards to the Bursary Scheme funding who meet income eligibility criteria:

Learning difficulties or medical conditions	For example, students who have a hearing or visual difficulty, dyslexia, physical disability, mental health or physical health problems which could affect their studies.
Parents	Students who are mainly responsible for children whom they claim child benefit for and who require help with the cost of Childcare in order to attend College.

The College will also prioritise the following groups of students who meet income eligibility criteria:

Former care leavers	Students who in the last 10 years have been 'care leavers' or 'looked after children'.
Exceptional Travel Cost	Students who live more than five miles away from College.
Unemployed	Students who are in receipt of income related out of work benefits.

The College may request additional proof regarding an individual's circumstances in relation to the above priority groups.

Please note: The College will consider each Bursary Scheme application in the order in which they are received. Priority will be given to those who have successfully applied for their Advanced Learner Loan.

2022/23 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Guidelines



If I am eligible, will my application to the bursary scheme definitely be successful?

Although Stoke College will endeavour to help as many eligible applicants as possible, the College has a limited amount of money available to help students and eligibility does not guarantee an award will be made. You are advised to apply as soon as you have successfully applied for your Advanced Learner Loan.

When can I apply?

You must have successfully applied for an Advanced Learner Loan for your course fees before applying to the bursary scheme.

What financial help can I apply for?

- You can apply for help with travel if you live at a distance of 2 miles or more from the College site at which you study.
- You can apply for help with childcare costs whilst you are studying – You can find information on applying for help with childcare costs further on in these guidelines under the heading 'Help with Childcare Costs'.
- Students who are not 'fully funded learners' can also apply for help with essential equipment and uniform costs.

If your application is successful we will write/email with details of your travel award.

All applications will be acknowledged on receipt and then we will write to you again with details of your travel award if you have been successful.

For details of awards for Childcare costs please refer to the sections further on in these guidelines under the heading 'Applying for 'Help with Childcare Costs'.

Evidence

If you do not supply the evidence requested on the application form, we will contact you. Please note we cannot process your application without the correct evidence.

Unsuccessful Applications

If you have been unsuccessful, we will write to you informing you why and with details of how you can appeal against any decision made.

How and when will Awards be made?

Essential equipment and uniform will usually be purchased or costs met by the College on behalf of the student, the Bursary Fund will reimburse the College.

If you are required to purchase essential uniform and equipment, these would be reimbursed by BACS credit transfer.

Please note that no guarantee can be given that the full

cost of an item will be reimbursed.

For Students living in North Staffordshire, travel support will take the form of a subsidised Smart multi-operator bus pass, which allows you to travel on buses provided by different operators across North Staffordshire with just one ticket – facilitated by weekly, monthly and three-monthly passes issued by the Student Financial Assistance team.

If you live outside of the North Staffordshire area, we would look to provide subsidised travel support in the form of a First bus pass. If you have to use alternative transport methods you may be eligible for Discretionary Bursary travel payments, which will be made by monthly BACS credit transfer into the student's bank account.

Are there any other conditions for receiving payment?

You must be fully enrolled on your course and have attended all your lessons and tutorials for at least 2 weeks before any payment will be authorised. To continue to receive payments throughout the college year your attendance must be 90% or above and you must adhere to the conditions of your Learner Agreement, which you will sign at enrolment. Attendance will be checked monthly before a payment is made.

If attendance is below 90%, unless there are extenuating circumstances confirmed by your tutor, no payment will be made.

Appeals

Appeals in respect of any unsuccessful application or with respect to the award made need to be made in writing to the Director of Student Services.

Changes in Circumstances/Fraud

Students are required to disclose any change in circumstances – personal, financial or educational that may affect their eligibility for funding. Failure to notify us of these changes could result in students becoming liable for the cost of funding given. Forms must be filled in truthfully and accurately and the College reserves the right to recover any funding which has been obtained fraudulently.

Confidentiality

Forms and evidence of income are only seen by staff involved in the administration/auditing of the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Scheme and all information is stored securely and treated as confidential.

2022/23 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Guidelines



Equality and Diversity Statement

The Director of Student Services and the Student Financial Assistance Team will:

1. Take positive action to ensure that all eligible students can apply for financial support to the bursary scheme, thus widening participation and providing learning opportunities for underrepresented groups.
2. Ensure that no applicant to the bursary scheme receives less favourable treatment which cannot be justified in relation to individual financial/personal circumstances.
3. Ensure that all literature, marketing and publicity materials are free from stereotypes, discriminatory assumptions, images and language.
4. Monitor and review the effectiveness of the support on a regular basis.
5. Ensure that this form is available in other formats if required.

GDPR

Stoke on Trent College is a data controller committed to ensuring the security and protection of the personal information that we process under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Student Financial Assistance Team collect data requested on the bursary application form and use it to assess your eligibility to access learner support funds. Data is inputted onto our electronic systems to allow us to make payments. Application forms and associated evidence is stored securely on campus: for learners studying off site this data will be stored at one of our main sites (Cauldon or Burslem).

Your data may be shared with relevant government departments or their agencies for the purpose of quality assurance and compliance.

Our Data Protection Policy is available on our website if you require further information.

Useful Information

Guidelines on the purpose and use of the Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Scheme are detailed in the Education and Skills Funding Agency Funding Rules 2022 – 2023. Copies of relevant extracts are available from the College's Student Financial Assistance team.

Help with Childcare Costs

Additional Eligibility Criteria

Students applying for help with Childcare must meet the general eligibility and attendance requirements, which have already been outlined in this guidance.

In addition, you must also meet the following criteria:

- Be the person who is mainly responsible for the child/children for whom you are applying for childcare

costs. You will be asked to provide proof of this, for example; your Child Benefit Entitlement letter.

- Your childcare provider must be Ofsted registered. If your application is successful we will write to your provider for proof.

The maximum awards the College can make per-child for Childcare are detailed in the table below:

Nursery	Registered Childminder	Before and After School Clubs
Daily £45	Daily £45	Per Session
Half Day £25	Half Day £25	AM £5 PM £8

How many children can I apply for help with?

As our funds are limited we will only be able to pay our maximum award of £45 per day, any awards for a second child will be subject to availability of funds and at the discretion of the College.

If your household income threshold is above £28,000 you will not be eligible to apply to the Bursary Scheme.

We will also take into account any 2 or 3 year old funding you receive when making awards.

What if my childcare provider charges more than this?

If your childcare provider's rates are higher than the above rates, it will be your responsibility to pay for any shortfall in funding. It might be advisable for you to discuss this with your provider and put in place weekly or monthly payments.

How much Childcare can I apply for help with?

The bursary will only contribute for the days/half days or hours when you are timetabled to be in college for lessons and tutorials, and for reasonable travelling time to and from College. It is important that you take this into account when arranging your childcare with your provider. It is also important to be as accurate as possible when filling in your provider details and how much childcare you require as initially we will base our estimated award on this.

Are there any additional conditions for receiving financial help with Childcare costs?

Your child's attendance with the Childcare provider must be 80% or above each month, and we will make regular checks with your provider.

If I am eligible, will my application for Childcare costs definitely be successful?

Although Stoke on Trent College will endeavour to help as many eligible applicants as possible with Childcare costs, the College has a limited amount of money available to help students and eligibility does not guarantee an award will be made. You are advised to apply as soon as you

2022/23 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Guidelines



have successfully applied for your Advanced Learning Loan.

Priority will be given to students who have successfully applied for their Advanced Loan and submitted a Bursary application.

Please note that the childcare provision contract is between the Student and Childcare Provider and the College cannot be responsible for any childcare costs incurred because of an unsuccessful application.

Application forms and evidence are posted at your own risk and the college does not accept responsibility for evidence, which has not been received.

What happens after I have made my application?

Upon receipt of your Bursary Scheme application, we will provide you with further details about the application process.

If your Childcare application is successful, we will write to your Childcare provider confirming payment arrangements (subject to you being fully enrolled).

If your Childcare application is unsuccessful we will write to you to confirm we cannot fund your application.

How will payment for Childcare be made?

Payments will be made directly to your Childcare Provider by BACs credit transfer. Normally, these will be equal monthly payments from the start to the end of your course.